

**Single Family Design Guidelines Update
Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance Update**

Steering Committee

**Meeting #22 Notes
April 16, 2005**

Steering Committee members: Chair Dianne Channing, Vice Chair Brian Barnwell, Bruce Bartlett, Joe Guzzardi, Vadim Hsu, Charmaine Jacobs, Bill Mahan, Helene Schneider, Richard Six.

Staff: Bettie Weiss (City Planner), Jaime Limón (Supervising Planner), Heather Baker (Project Planner), Jason Smart (Intern).

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

None.

III. Administrative Items

IV. Steering Subcommittee Reports

The Story Pole Steering Subcommittee met March 14 to discuss potential guidelines and is awaiting notes from that meeting.

The FAR Steering Subcommittee did not report.

Also, Staff reported that Staff met with Roger Moore and Ginny Filice of the Citywide Homeowners Association and some FAR Steering Subcommittee members were present at the meeting.

V. Draft Floor to Lot Area Ratio Proposals: Follow-Up Discussion Issue Paper II

a. Staff Presentation

b. Public Comment

Laura Rasmussen: Mesa homeowner and former president of Allied Neighborhood Association. Resident may have a different vision for Santa Barbara's future than commercial and development interests. Supports a fixed FAR and shares the concerns to be presented by Susan Trescher.

Michael Gray: Former Planning Commissioner. Presented written correspondence from Citizens Planning Association, including a suggestion for a standard limiting the size of home expansion by no more than 50% of the existing structure. (Correspondence distributed in April 16th Steering Committee transmittal).

Claudia Madsen: Having guidelines and suggestions rather than enforceable rules makes the NPO ineffective and leads to monster homes. An absolute maximum FAR limiting home size according to lot size is needed. While a .30 FAR for 6,000 sq. ft. lots appears reasonable, a bonus on top of that is an unacceptable loophole.

Ramón Alcerro: We must balance preservation with necessary change. FARs will preserve neighborhood stability and allow more time to determine if neighborhood changes are appropriate. An FAR of .30 for 6,000 sq. ft. lots seems to be adequate. Such a requirement would lead to more creative and beautiful architecture, not stifle design. The NPO should be clear and not promote uncertainty.

Tom Williams: Longtime resident on a 6,000 sq. ft. lot on the Mesa. Opposed to FARs because one size does not fit all. Terms such as “maximum” or “maximum + bonus” are just plays on words. On the Mesa, 25-30 houses have added second stories and yet are not grossly shaped. There are no mansions on the Mesa, and yet many 2,200-2,400 sq. ft. homes now on the Mesa would exceed the maximum + bonus FAR in Table 6 of Issue Paper D Follow-Up Discussion II. There is no overwhelming demand for the City to adopt FAR regulations as exemplified by only a few hundred people having attended Steering Committee meetings. 1,800-2,200 sq. ft. is too restrictive for a 6,000 sq. ft. lot and shouldn’t be used as the basis for the rest of the table. Not opposed to aspects of NPO Update other than FAR regulations.

Claudia Weitanner: Supports maximum FAR of .30 for 6,000 sq. ft. lots because too many homes afford no privacy. Homes are too close to each other and are aesthetically displeasing.

May Page: Supports FAR limits.

Lee Moldaver: Supports Claudia Madsen’s recommendations. The Steering Committee should keep in mind the goal of the NPO Update: a new ordinance that reduces the ABR’s workload and is equitable. Such a new ordinance would be clear, simple and objective. The FAR tables in Issue Paper D Follow-Up Discussion II are too complicated. “Maximum” should mean largest possible. Bonus square footage beyond the maximum FAR should not be granted unless a dramatic public benefit is demonstrable. Modifications should not be allowed except in very limited circumstances. Would like Steering Committee to consider limiting additions to 50% of existing square footage in any 10-year period. Recommends a goal of presenting key concepts of the NPO to the City Council for initial public discussion by the first week of September.

Toby Bradley: Presented written correspondence from Louis Manzo of the SB Association of Realtors. (distributed in April 22nd Steering Committee transmittal).

William Hazard: Marine Terrace resident. NPO Update should focus on neighborhoods in transition and minimize ABR hearing time while meeting public expectations. A maximum + bonus FAR would make ABR’s job more difficult. FAR limits are not a substitute for design review. The devil is in the details. The difference between .30 and .34 is major for small lots. The need to explore tailored statements for select neighborhoods was discussed in February 2004 but hasn’t been addressed recently. There are sufficient differences between West and East Mesa that it would be difficult to agree on any set of rules. Family dynamics have changed over the years. Privacy is important, but people need to be able to take advantage of views. On north-south streets, sometimes windows must look out upon other houses in order to take advantage of views. 2,200 sq. ft. is not very large by modern standards.

Mac Bakewell: Marine Terrace resident. Supports Claudia Madsen's and Lee Moldaver's comments. The NPO Update should yield clear, simple, objective and quantifiable rules. A maximum + bonus is a mistake; "maximum" should mean maximum. The Steering Committee should consider a 50% home expansion limit (*as suggested by Gray for CPA & Moldaver*).

Brian Wilson: What makes SB beautiful are the people who live here. Concerned about FAR restrictions because many hardworking people struggle to buy a home in SB. It is economically difficult to remain in SB, so FARs could force families to move to other communities. Everyone wants the opportunity to have a nice home. A restriction on the size of second stories would encourage people to expand first floors instead, which would remove yard space that is used by children.

Kim Wilson: One size doesn't fit all. It is important to consider the social and economic consequences to the City. Children are the future of our community. Parents today need to watch children in their homes or yards, so sufficient square footage is needed. Families are paying \$1 million for a home and then getting stuck with insufficient square footage. Restricting home size will lead to transient residents who don't help build up the community. The entire community shouldn't be punished because a few people had bad homes approved by the ABR. There are plenty of beautiful homes on small lots, so use the rules in place. A lot of residents have children and can't get to meetings, and many have no idea this process is happening. People old and young alike currently don't have a broad voice and a vote.

Karen Fryklund: Representing Citywide Homeowners Association. Glad that the Steering Committee is meeting on a Saturday because community input is needed. Young people are the ones most upset about the NPO Update, but it is very difficult for them to attend the meetings. The association's survey found that the update won't be good for area families. Goleta should not be used as a model for SB. There are small, medium and large homes on the Mesa that are compatible. A house is very personal; one size doesn't fit all. The ABR does an OK job, and SB is developing beautifully.

Joe Cantrell: Marine Terrace resident. There is an affordability crisis in SB. Building larger and larger homes doesn't help entry-level housing. People who can afford \$1 million homes and can afford to build a giant addition aren't helping entry-level homeowners. The Neighborhood Visual Survey generated by Staff is the only in-depth, reliable study about housing preferences in SB. The policies created should be well-defined and easy to understand from the beginning of the building process to the end. We need to discard the two-tiered FAR proposal, because applicants will always ask for the max + bonus at ABR and because it would increase uncertainty in the permit process. The current NPO is too vague. Straightforward language will save time for Staff and review boards. The size of a house an applicant is allowed to build depends on who attends review board meetings, who likes the applicant, and the lawyers the applicant hires. The only guarantee when building a large home is that it will cost time, grief and money.

Jennifer Moore: Opposes FARs because they would be a drastic and unfair change.

Timothy Harding: Appreciates holding a Saturday meeting. Lowering the maximum + bonus from 2,200 to 2,070 sq. ft. is wrong, because 2,200 is too restrictive. Well-

designed houses can be 2,600 or 2,700 sq. ft. We're building for people. People need space to build a house that's adequate for their family. People who want to raise families will have to leave the community or stay in town and rent. There are already plenty of restrictions on home size other than FARs. Large garage square footage allowances are undesirable because people should be encouraged to use public transit and depend on their cars less. Restricting the size of second stories limits flexibility and good design. Sometimes a second story is more appropriate than a larger first story. Micromanaging restrictions are inappropriate.

Dorothy Fox: Made bedrooms in her home large because her extended family stays there often. Houses are built to fit multiple generations. The importance of privacy in backyards has been overemphasized. A lot of people who don't want big homes next to them probably don't want anyone next to them.

Bud Laurent: Representing Coastal Housing Partnership. NPO Update will impact 40,000 workers. Believes neighborhood compatibility is important. The CHP supports the ability of South Coast workers to expand their homes and meet the needs of their families. 500 sq. ft. of garage space should be excluded from FAR calculations. If there is a two-tier FAR system, it should ensure that certain home sizes are exempt from ABR review (assuming the lot is exempt from all other triggers) in order to provide a safe harbor. The NPO needs to be simplified. Apparent size is more important than actual size. The NPO shouldn't apply to Planned Unit Development or other new, small lots. 6,000 sq. ft. lots comprise seven units per acre, which isn't very dense by neotraditional standards. Denser development is possible.

Russell Doherty: Lives next to a large home on the Mesa that was not approved by the ABR. The project was piecemealed into four permits, and Staff didn't have adequate guidelines to deny any of them. Doesn't want SB to have nothing but rental housing like in Santa Monica. Over 25% of current home purchases are by investors, according to the *L.A. Times*. Homes appreciate a great deal in California and SB in particular. Discretionary rules are useless.

Connie Hannah: Representing SB League of Women Voters. It's easy to get bogged down in minutiae; focus on primary objectives of NPO Update: Protect neighborhoods from excessively large, incompatible homes; create equitable and easily understood standards; make rules relatively easy to administer so as to cut down on lengthy arguments, appeals and litigation; and preserve a modicum of affordable housing for the middle class. There needs to be a maximum FAR determined by lot size, and .30 is appropriate for 6,000 sq. ft. lots. For larger lots, the League favors Montecito's FARs. Allowing bonuses over the maximum is contrary to the Ordinance intent, because it will be less equitable.

Jacqueline Gist: Agrees with everything Susan Trescher will say. We need guidelines that can't be negotiated and appealed.

Susan Trescher: La Mesa Neighborhood Association president. The Association supports an absolute maximum rather than a two-tiered system, with the possibility of variances for particularly difficult lots. A .30 FAR for 6,000 sq. ft. lots, excluding garage space, is reasonable. FAR restrictions don't guarantee or prevent good design, which is entirely separate from FAR. Clear, simple, objective and quantifiable

standards are needed to reduce ABR workload. Discretionary rules haven't supported neighborhood preservation. People should be able to build a bedroom over their garage without a modification.

Sheila Lodge: Agree with comments in CPA written correspondence. A bonus will become a maximum in people's minds. Simple FARs will let people know in advance what they have to work with.

Lisa Burns: Presented written correspondence (distributed in April 22nd Steering Committee transmittal).

Joe Andrulaitis: Presented written correspondence (distributed in April 22nd Steering Committee transmittal).

Paul Poirier: People are leaving SB due to economics. Many 2,500 sq. ft. homes on 7,500 sq. ft. lots look identical to other, smaller homes in the neighborhood. Most problems result from two-story homes. 1,800 or 3,000 sq. ft. homes can be beautiful or ugly, depending on design. ABR does a fine job ensuring quality. Strict FAR limits won't yield neighborhood compatibility. Case studies should be examined. Families and young people have been underrepresented in the process so far and few have commented on FARs.

Marco Babich: Thanks the Steering Committee for holding a Saturday meeting. Lives in Davis, but owns an 850 sq. ft. house on the Mesa. A 50% expansion of this home (*as suggested by Gray for CPA & Moldaver*) wouldn't be enough to fit a family. Why was the maximum + bonus FAR lowered rather than the maximum FAR raised? Strict FAR restrictions would lead to two types of residents: 1) college students, and 2) people who have lived in SB for decades. It is important to have a diverse neighborhood. FAR restrictions don't achieve smart planning. Covered porches and balconies shouldn't be included in FAR calculations.

Gregg Leach: Realtor. Supports FAR restrictions. If bonus FAR is granted beyond the maximum, single stories should be encouraged in order to preserve privacy.

Eric Schott: Realtor. Doesn't believe majority of realtors oppose FARs. FARs are needed to prevent neighbor conflicts.

Michelle Giddens: Single mom. Doesn't want standard of living to be compromised. There is a lot of middle ground we're not getting to. Building a second story rather than expanding the first story preserves yard space. Yards are important for dog owners.

Janice Taylor: Mesa resident. There is significant pressure in the state to accommodate more people. Imposing very strict FARs may make it harder to protect open space. Doesn't want too many renters in neighborhoods.

Chris Manson-Hing: Marine Terrace resident. Hopes the Steering Committee will look at the details of attics, basements and grading, because these details will be critical toward making the NPO comprehensive. Doesn't support any potential 50% addition limit (*as suggested by Gray for CPA & Moldaver*) because it would not be fair.

c. Discussion

Steering Committee members thanked the public for their input and made the following additional comments:

Brian Barnwell: The terms “maximum” and “maximum + bonus” are problematic. Perhaps they should be replaced with terms such as “15% under maximum” and “maximum,” with the “15% under maximum” serving as the lower tier for special ABR scrutiny. The draft proposed FAR numbers on the latest issue paper table are now too small and need to be adjusted to be more flexible. For example, believes a 2200 maximum FAR square footage is more appropriate than 2070 square feet for 6000 square foot lots; the formula for the numbers in the draft proposed FAR table need to be adjusted to reflect this.

Helene Schneider: Big houses on small lots seem to be the main issue. Supports having guidelines only for larger lots and supports the garage allowance numbers in Table 6 of Issue Paper D Follow-Up Discussion II. Rather than a potential standard limiting the size of a second story (e.g. to 1000 square feet), second story guidelines would be more appropriate. A 50% limit (*as suggested by Gray for CPA & Moldaver*) would be unfair because home sizes vary widely within neighborhoods.

Bill Mahan: The maximum + bonus FAR for 6,000 sq. ft. lots in Table 6 of the issue paper is too restrictive. A formula should be used in the ordinance to determine maximum home size. FAR restrictions will not be “one size fits all,” because there will be different requirements for different lot sizes. “Wedding cake” design is encouraged by the existing miscellaneous design criteria of a setback of 1.5 for second stories and it is not appropriate in many instances.

Bruce Bartlett: Regrets lack of input from families thus far. Supports simple formulas for calculating FAR. Applicants should be allowed more living space if they propose less than a certain amount of garage space. FARs may not be necessary for larger lots.

Richard Six: More case studies are needed to examine how proposed FARs would apply to actual projects. The draft proposed FAR numbers on the latest issue paper table are now too small and need to be adjusted to be more flexible.

Charmaine Jacobs: Understands how families feel about home size restrictions. Perhaps separate FAR requirements are needed for hillside lots and infill lots, as is the case in Montecito. An FAR closer to .40 may be more appropriate than the smaller FAR numbers on the current draft FAR proposal table.

Joe Guzzardi: A 50% limit (*as suggested by Gray for CPA & Moldaver*) would be unfair. Respecting neighbors is crucial. The two-tier system may be necessary, but the system would only work with strict standards for the second tier if the second tier of numbers is large.

Vadim Hsu: Table 6 is too complicated and restrictive. Has designed attractive homes that would exceed numbers in the table. Could go with a fixed one-tier FAR, but in that case, higher square footage maximums would be needed. It is important to look creatively at required open space and yard setbacks.

Dianne Channing: The burden should be on the applicant to prove that a project is compatible with the neighborhood. Flexibility is needed to account for differences between neighborhoods. Perhaps all second stories should be reviewed by ABR. A 50% limit (*as suggested by Gray for CPA & Moldaver*) would be unfair.

VI. Review Upcoming Schedule

VII. Adjourn

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